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SUBJECT: (U) PAKISTAN: PM BLAIR MEETS MUSHARRAF IN LAHORE

Classified By: PolCouns Richard Mills; reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: November 19 talks between PM Blair and President Musharraf focused on counter-terrorism, Afghanistan, and Islamic extremism, according to Kate English of FCO's Pakistan Section (based on a preliminary read-out from the UK High Commission in Islamabad). Musharraf complained to Blair that Afghan President Karzai had given refuge to the son of Baluchi leader Bugti, who was killed by Pakistani forces earlier this year. After the talks, Blair told the press the bilateral relationship was at its highest point &for many, many years,8 praised Musharraf,s &courage and leadership8 and endorsed his program of &enlightened moderation.8 The two leaders issued a Joint Declaration announcing a doubling of UK aid over the next three years, a ten-year commitment to a development partnership, and increased university linkages. From Pakistan, the PM flew on to Afghanistan. END SUMMARY.

Blair-Musharraf Talks

12. (C) The atmosphere at the Blair-Musharraf talks, during PM Blair's November 19 visit to Lahore, was "very good," according to the FCO Pakistan Section (based on the section's preliminary read-out from the UK High Commission in Islamabad). Blair pressed Musharraf for action against the Taliban in Quetta. Musharraf gave a "100 percent commitment" to action against the Taliban and in aid of counter-terrorism efforts in the UK. His major request to Blair was for increased trade. Musharraf also complained that Afghan President Karzai had given refuge to the son of Baluchi leader Bugti, killed by Pakistani forces earlier this year. Musharraf claimed to be trying to put together a more moderate coalition for the 2007 elections. It was the UK side's impression that Musharraf seemed more confident than when he last met with Blair in September, perhaps due to Musharraf's recent success in getting legislation through parliament, notably the female protection bill.

Joint Declaration

13. (C) The Joint Declaration issued during the visit did not provide figures for the ten-year development partnership. It did provide for creation of a Joint Working Group between the British Home Office and the Pakistani Ministry of Interior, to address illegal migration, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics. The two leaders agreed to cooperate more closely on counter-terrorism and Afghanistan. The UK pledged to provide two Mi-17 helicopters in April 2007 for counter-narcotics operations, to be paid for out of Home Office funds.

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